MR. LAMONICA: My name is Rick LaMonica. I'm still kind of sad. I moved to Missouri -- I grew up near one of -- the only, as far as I understand, nuclear fuel reprocessing plants that was ever created and it was in west New York. It was finally closed down when they had to admit that they had to ban milk from all the cows in the surrounding counties because there was so much contamination from radioactive releases. It's now being used as a state nuclear dump site. I'm not sure what Missouri has for a nuclear dump site. I do have a background in science and I hope I don't get a few scientists that work with DOE in trouble, but I'm summarizing my understanding of some reports that they have.

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First off, I would like to say that there are many reasons why this whole project is very premature and should be rejected. As far as I'm aware, there is no method for processing or handling nuclear waste in the 60 years since we started making is that have not failed. Congress seems to be, in its eminent wisdom, working overtime to provide more subsidies for nuclear power and businesses, but the process still remains so financially and technologically infeasible that no reactors have been built for 25 years. I think it's absurd to really even talk about moving it anywhere when you don't have any idea what you're going to do when it gets there.

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Congress has said we don't care, Nevada is going to be an interim parking lot for this hazardous waste. It seems to me unsound, until some permanent

method of storage can even be devised, to even think of moving it some place. My main concerns are basically my understanding of some reports -- articles by scientists that work with DOE that there is serious concerns about whether underground storage facilities can ever be safely designed that could possibly isolate highly radioactive waste for the necessary tens of hundreds of thousands of years to allow decay of additional material. I have no idea where this 10,000 years came from, but it seems to be some number some bureaucrat pulled out of a hat. Maybe one of our geniuses and highly ethical people in Congress came up with it.

3 Both DOE and many other scientists find many problems with this whole process. There is extensive geological data, as many people have mentioned, on Yucca Mountain. The area could not possibly keep the waste isolated. It is highly seismologically active, it contains many past volcanoes and possible magma pockets now. It has highly fractured rock and will allow flow of

4 water and radioactive materials to occur. It is known that the steel containment canisters last used to vitrify in an attempt to stabilize nuclear waste fuel rods would not remain intact for more than a few centuries in any known storage method.

5 Analysis by DOE scientists show that thermally nucleophilic (ph) materials -- and I'm sorry that I probably am -- in case there is some scientists and some PR people here -- may be misusing some of these

terms, but thermally nucleophilic (ph) materials such as reactor rays could disperse into surrounding rocks by either natural or unnatural processes. You're talking about 10,000 years. We have a government that's 200 years. 10,000 years ago, from my understanding, would be before the last ice age. The scientists that I'm mainly basing this on is Bowman and Veneric or one of the labs in New Mexico. Their conclusion -- and I hate to, again, use a lot of technical terms, some critical concentrations underground could migrate into regions of critical autocatalytic self-enhancing chain reactions. For us simpler people, in lay terms, that's an explosion.

This could occur with all types of waste from all types of reactors and bomb production processes. This nuclear process would be largely dependent on the amount of nucleophilic (ph) material, moderation of the reaction neutrons by water or rocks and surrounding material. Feedback mechanisms could be either positive or negative depending on the amount of water, the shape and concentration of the dispersed radioactive material.

MR. BROWN: If you can wrap this up in about a minute or so.

MR. LAMONICA: Let me -- yes. Autocatalytic feedback could reach critical -- it would be increasingly possible over time with the presence of water and plutonium that's in this irradiated fuel rod waste. This could cause underground nuclear explosions with possibly a force of possibly 200 tons. The known rock fractures in this mountain region would enhance both migration of

water and physical material, thus making the chain reaction more likely and facilitate venting of plutonium and other radioactive waste into air and contamination of water. I want to conclude just with a statement by Senator Bryan from Nevada in 1995 when they were debating this thing in Congress. He said, "I am shocked and outraged that the Department of Energy and the nuclear power industry continues to force acceptance of a dump in Nevada when it appears that their own scientists cannot reach a consensus on the most fundamental safety questions related to the nuclear age. The scientific community is still questioning the safe premise of geological storage, yet the DOE's longstanding official position is that nuclear waste storage at Yucca Mountain is a political problem, not a technical one."

I want to add personally I'm appalled by Congress. They seem to be crafting this regardless of the safety of their constituents, with the possible exception just before elections. They ignore daunting technical problems, repeatedly force federal agencies like the Department of Energy and the liability and cost on the taxpayers by mandating a national nuclear waste depository. The safest method would probably be just leave it where it is, and when the nuclear power plants run out of storage space, then the only solution then is to shut them down. There's no logic in moving 70,000 tons of highly radioactive waste between communities that have little ability to cope with it, with extreme

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likelihood of accidents over 30 years. I thank you and I do hope that somebody in Washington does seriously consider all the comments that people have made at all these hearings.